

Capsule Summary

SM-655

Farmhouse on St. Catherine's Island

Avenue vicinity

Private

c. 1890-1900

(Page 1)

This two story, three bay, frame dwelling with a c. 1917-1918 one-and-a-half story ell lies on the north side of St. Catherine's Island which is located near the Wicomico and Potomac Rivers. The main block of the house was erected in the late-nineteenth century, with a wing added by Captain Charles Beitzell in 1917-1918. Further interior modifications were made in the 1940s by the Jefferson Island Club in order to accomodate its membership. Among the carpenters who modified the interior of the dwelling was a famous folk singer "Pop" Stoneman from West Virginia.¹

As this house relates, St. Catherine's Island was once a farm where corn, tobacco, and alfalfa were grown and cattle were raised. Documentary records suggest that the island consisted of 180 acres in the eighteenth century. Continual erosion over the past two hundred years, however, has reduced it to approximately 50. With the gradual shrinking and the relative isolation of the island, the land ceased to be cultivated and is presently overgrown.

As early as the 1780s, the island, called Chesildine Island, was owned by Kenelm Chesildine. Upon his death his property was described by assessors appointed by the St. Mary's Orphans Court. The assessors noted the island contained "about one hundred acres...43 Apple trees, 26 Cherry trees, no Houses, Fences or Timber trees on the Land."² By the 1820s Kenelm Blackistone owned the property. After he died, however, his descendents Dent and Nathaniel

¹ Jefferson Caffery Glassie, The History of the Jefferson Islands Club and St. Catherine's Island (N.p.: n.p., 1981), 68.

² St. Mary's County, Register of Wills, Annual Valuations and Assessments, 1780-1807, Book i, folio 69. These records are located at the Maryland Hall of Records.

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(Page 2)

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were forced to sell the island to Morris Shanks in order to settle his sizeable debts. Subsequent owners included George Y. and Ann M. Wethered, Benjamin Jenkins, A.J. and Maria Cheseldine, A. Freeman Cheseldine, Charles Beitzell, and Benjamin R. Jacobs. It was Jacobs who actually had greater plans for the island as a waterside community for in 1927 he formed the St. Catherine's Island Corporation and later subdivided a series of lots along the southwest side of the island. Lack of interest eventually precipitated the sale of the island in 1946 to the Jefferson Island Club.

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SM-655, Farmhouse on St. Catherine's Island
St. Mary's County
Maryland Comprehensive State Historic Preservation Data

Historic Context

Geographic Organization:

Western Shore

Chronological/Developmental Period:

Industrial/Urban Dominance, 1870-1930
Modern Period, 1930-present

Historic Period Theme:

Architecture
Government/Law

Resource Type

Category:

Building

Historic Environment:

Island, Rural

Historic Function and Use:

Farmhouse, Lodge

Known Design Source:

None

**Maryland Historical Trust
State Historic Sites Inventory Form**

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF
HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Survey No. SM-655

Magi No.

DOE ☐ yes ☐ no

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Chesildine Island, St. Catherine's Island

and/or common Farmhouse on St. Catherine's Island (pref.)

2. Location

street & number N side of St. Catherine's Island ☐ not for publication

city, town Avenue ☒ vicinity of congressional district 7

state Md county St. Mary's TM-46, G-14, P-308

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: hunting lodge

4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Jefferson Island Club c/o Charles Cromwell

street & number 6709 Georgia Street telephone no.: John Kern 301-229-6435

city, town Chevy Chase state and zip code Md 20815

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. St. Mary's County Courthouse liber CBG 18

street & number folio 401

city, town Leonardtown state Md

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date ☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Survey No. SM-655

Condition

☐ excellent
☐ good
☒ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site

☐ moved

date of move _____

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Contributing Resource Count: 2

The Farmhouse on St. Catherine's Island is situated on the northwest side of St. Catherine's Island on the east side of a small cove. Overlooking St. Catherine's Sound (also locally called "The Narrows"), the farmhouse is oriented on a north/south axis with the primary elevation facing south. Much of the island is overgrown, but the area surrounding the dwelling consists of mowed grass. This grassy area links the wharf and nearby Jefferson Island Club Lodge (SM-654) to the dwelling. In July of 1998, a tornado ran across the island destroying a portion of the Lodge, but leaving the farmhouse intact. A one story storage building lies to the south of the dwelling and is used to store duck decoys and other supplies.

The Farmhouse on St. Catherine's Island is a two story, three bay, frame dwelling with a one-and-a-half story frame wing. The dwelling, constructed c. 1890-1900 rests on a brick foundation that in turn supports a circular sawn frame. Clapboard fastened with mature cut nails covers the frame. The roof is covered with asphalt shingles. According to oral tradition and architectural evidence, the two story main block was constructed c. 1890 with the wing added later c. 1917-1918.

The farmhouse's south elevation consists of the front of the main block and wing. The main block is pierced on the first floor by a centrally located panelled door flanked on either side by a six-over-six, double-hung sash window. All of these bays are shaded by a screened-in porch that extends the full length of the elevation. The second floor is pierced by three six-over-six windows. The roof of the main block features two, interior-end, brick chimney flues. The wing has a four panel door and a six-over-six window. The half story, meanwhile, is lit by a gable dormer pierced by a set of paired six-over-six windows.

While the west gable end of the main block does not have any openings, the wing's gable end exhibits a six-over-six window on the first and half stories.

A two story addition projects from the rear or north elevation. The addition is pierced by a six-over-six window. The main portion of the main block is pierced on the first and second floors by two six-over-six windows. The wing features two, six-over-six windows.

The east gable end of the main block exhibits a six-over-six window on the first and second floors.

The interior was not accessible at the time of the visit.

The one story, storage building that lies to the south of the farmhouse rests on a concrete foundation. The exterior clapboard, fastened with wire nails, covers a circular sawn frame. The building is sparsely fenestrated with a door located on the west side and windows on the north and south sides. The roof is sheathed with asphalt shingles.

8. Significance

Survey No. SM-655

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

check: Applicable Criteria: ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

This two story, three bay, frame dwelling with a c. 1917-1918 one-and-a-half story ell lies on the north side of St. Catherine's Island located near the Wicomico and Potomac Rivers. The main block of the house was erected in the late-nineteenth century with a wing added by Captain Charles Beitzell in 1917-1918. Further interior modifications were made in the 1940s by the Jefferson Island Club in order to accommodate its membership. Among the carpenters who modified the interior of the dwelling was a famous folk singer "Pop" Stoneman from West Virginia.¹

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² St. Mary's County, Register of Wills, Annual Valuations and Assessments, 1780-1807, Book i, folio 69. These records are located at the Maryland Hall of Records.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. SM-655

See Significance 8.0.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 50 acres +/-Quadrangle name Stratford HallQuadrangle scale 1:24 000

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A

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Zone Easting NorthingB

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Zone Easting NorthingC

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D

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E

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F

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G

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

Same as per deed description.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kirk E. Ranzetta, Historic Sites Surveyororganization St. Mary's County Dept. of Planning & Zoningdate 8-17-98street & number 22740 Washington Streettelephone 301-475-4662city or town Leonardtownstate Md

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
Shaw House
21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 269-2438

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
DHCP/DHCD
100 COMMUNITY PLACE
CROWNSVILLE, MD 21032-2023
514-7600

SM-655, Farmhouse on St. Catherine's Island
St. Mary's County
8.1 Significance

Chain-of-Title

(All deeds are located at the Land Records Office, St. Mary's County Courthouse, Leonardtown, Maryland unless otherwise noted.)

Reference: Liber CBG 18, Folio 401

Grantee: Jefferson Island Club

Grantor: Benjamin R. Jacobs

Date: June 28, 1946

Reference: Liber CBG 17, Folio 50

Grantee: Benjamin R. Jacobs

Grantor: The St. Catherine's Island Corporation

Date: January 5, 1945

Notes: The description of the property notes that the fifty acre island is bounded by the Wicomico and Potomac Rivers as well as St. Catherine's Bay.

Reference: Liber JMM 4, Folio 486

Grantee: The St. Catherine's Island Corporation

Grantor: Benjamin R. Jacobs

Date: January 22, 1927

Reference: Liber JMM 4, Folio 351

Grantee: Benjamin R. Jacobs

Grantor: Charles H. Beitzell

Date: October 25, 1926

Reference: Liber EBA 15, Folio 177

Grantee: Charles H. Beitzell

Grantor: A. Freeman Cheseldine

Date: June 17, 1916

Reference: Liber EBA 5, Folio 241

Grantee: A. Freeman Cheseldine

Grantor: E. Gray Pendleton and Emily B. Pendleton

Date: November 4, 1905

Notes: A "swash" is mentioned as being a portion of the property expressly reserved by the Pendleton's for the planting of oysters. "House Cove" and "Roger's Cove" are both mentioned in the description.

Reference: Liber JFF 11, Folio 1-2

Grantee: E. Gray Pendleton

Grantor: A. J. Cheseldine and Maria Cheseldin

Date: September 28, 1888

Reference: Liber JFF 2, Folio 190-191

Grantee: A. J. Cheseldine

Grantor: Benjamin W. Jenkins

Date: March 18, 1876

SM-655, Farmhouse on St. Catherine's Island
St. Mary's County
8.2 Significance

Reference: Liber JAC 5, Folio 342-343
Grantee: Benjamin W. Jenkins
Grantor: James Etchberger
Date: October 26, 1871

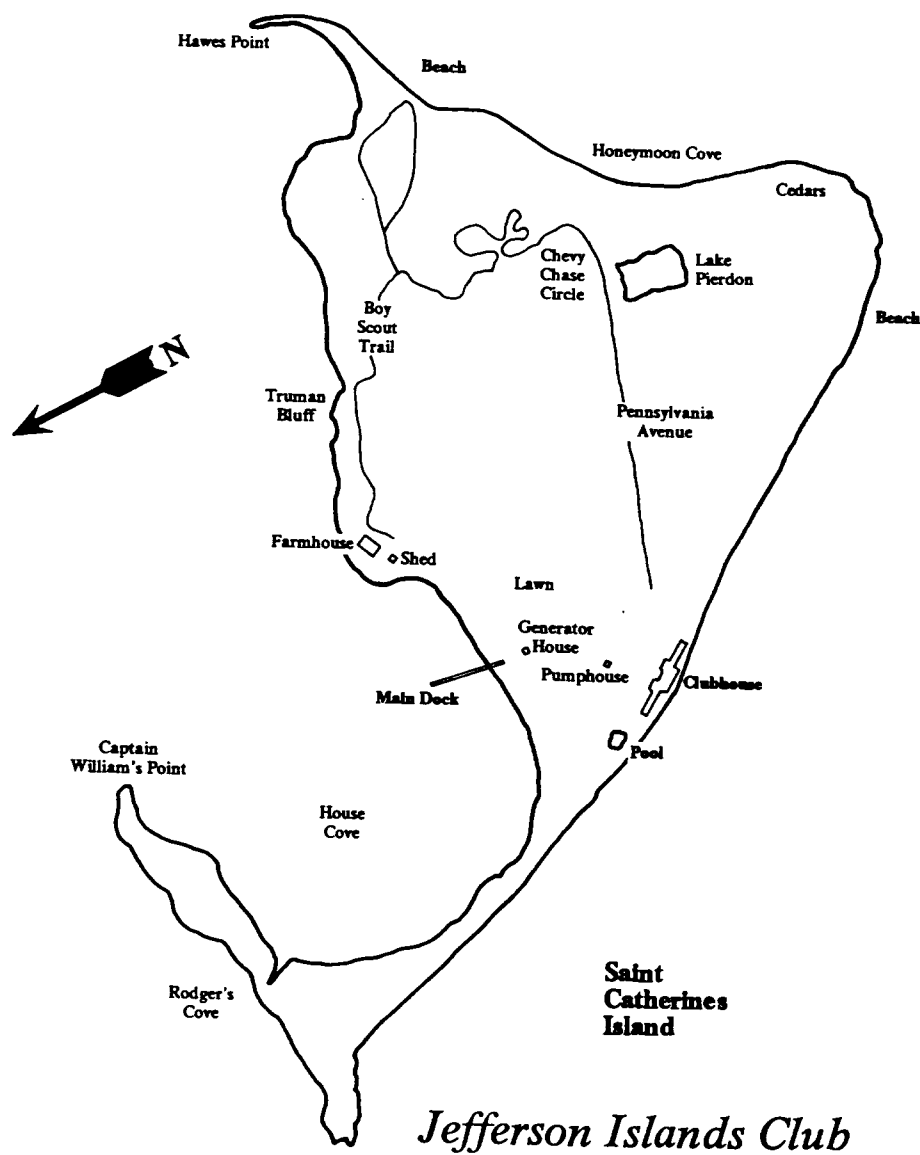
Reference: Liber JAC 5, Folio 342
Grantee: James Etchberger
Grantor: George Y. and Ann M. Wethered
Date: October 26, 1871

Reference: Liber JTB 2, Folio 52
Grantee: George Y. and Ann. M. Wethered
Grantor: Morris Shanks
Date: December 18, 1854

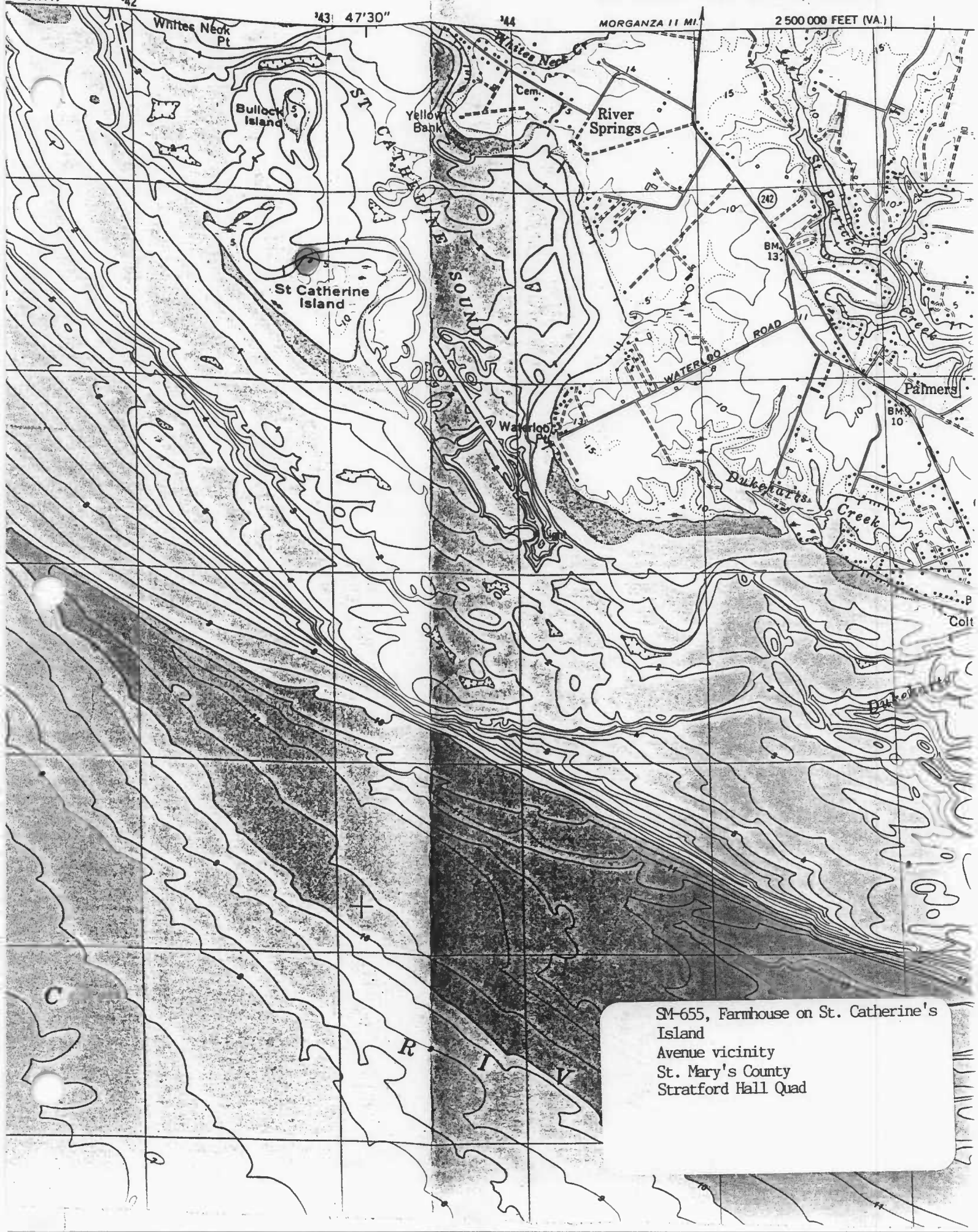
Reference: Liber JH 9, Folio 51
Grantee: Morris Shanks
Grantor: Dent Blackistone and Nathaniel Blackistone
Date: March 14, 1831

Reference: Decree Record JH 2, Folio 48
Notes: Initially brought before the Circuit Court of Equity in 1821, the case between Morris Shanks v. Dent and Nathaniel Blackistone is settled when the court appoints both brothers as trustees for the property (which was formerly owned by Kenelm Chesildine). A proper deed of conveyance is then elicited.

SM-655, Farmhouse on St. Catherine's Island
St. Mary's County
8.3 Significance



Map of St. Catherine's Island showing the location of the Farmhouse. From Jefferson Caffery Glassie, The History of the Jefferson Islands Club and St. Catherine's Island (N.p.: n.p., 1981), page not numbered.



SM-655, Farmhouse on St. Catherine's
Island
Avenue vicinity
St. Mary's County
Stratford Hall Quad



